(b) HNPCL is a joint venture of M/s. Ashok Leyland Limited of Hinduja Group and National Power Plc of United Kingdom. Equity component of the promoter as approved by CEA is foreign equity of US $ 354.35 million + domestic equity of Rs. 9.372 crores.

Integrated Barren Land Development Scheme

883. SHRI ANANTRAY DEV SHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the objective of Integrated Barren Land Development Scheme (IBLDS) and the aspects including in the Scheme;

(b) the details of targets fixed and achieved under the Scheme during the last three years, State-wise;

(c) the assistance provided by Government to Gujarat for the purpose; and

(d) the steps taken by Govenment to make the scheme successful?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) The Department of Land Resources is implementing an Integrated Wastelands Development Project (IWDP) Scheme. The main objective of this Scheme is to develop non-forest wastelands under the Guidelines for Watershed Development. The main aspect of the Scheme is to involve the community in development of wastelands through low cost locally available technology.

(b) State-wise targets are not fixed under Integrated Wastelands Development Project (IWDP) Scheme. Under this Scheme, project proposals for development of wastelands are formulated by the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs)/Zilla Parishads/ Research Institutes /Agricultural Universities and sanctioned to them on project to project basis. During the last three years i.e. 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99, an amount of Rs. 166.65 crores was released to various Agencies/Institutes for the development of 4,16,625 hectares of wastelands.

(c) An amount of Rs. 15.34 crores was released for the development of 38,350 hectares of wastelands in different districts of Gujarat State during the last three years.

(d) Successful implementation of the Scheme requires a high level participation of the community. Consequently Watershed Associations, Watershed Committees, User Groups, Self-Helf Groups have been constituted for the implementation of projects under the Scheme. The progress of various projects is also monitored from time to time at the State and Central level. The State Govenrments/ District Rural Development Agencies/Zilla Parishads/Regional Institutes are frequently requested by the Government of India to involve the local communities and the Panchayat Raj Institutions in implementation of the scheme in an effective manner.

Direct financial assistance to Panchayati Raj institutions

884. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken decision to give direct financial assistance to Panchayati Raj institutions, instead of routing it through the State Governments; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons behind this decision?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) Yes Sir. As per the current guidelines, 100% of the allocated funds under Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) and Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) are released to the Panchayati Raj Institutions through the District Rural Development Agencies/Zilla Parishads.

(b) Article 243G (b) of the Constitution of India envisages that Panchayats would be empowered to implement schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule. The implementation of rural development schemes through Panchayati Raj institutions is expected to encourage people's participation and their implementation and review as per local needs. Quick transfer of funds to the grassroots level is one of the reasons.